Applegate Valley Historical Society
15050 Hwy 238
CPO Box 3122
Applegate, Oregon 97530

July 2003 Newsletter

Hope this finds everyone enjoying the summer and keeping up with their garden, if you have one that is.

Thanks to Nancy (Head) Edwards for this month's history letter. Remember I can still use most anything you have. The next one comes out in September so I would need it be mid August. I'll be looking for yours in the PO Box.

The museum has some different items in it and Peggy is still looking for more. She would like to rotate them so if you have something you'd like to let others see, give her a call.

Have you had a chance to see all the beautiful flowers around the museum. Peggy has been very busy keeping up with the landscape. She has planted more plants and it looks great. Stop by and check it out. Let her know what you think.

Our next meeting will be on July 19th at 10:00 AM at the Museum. Please remember to bring you chair. Hope to see you then.

We have 2 different old postcards for sale for $1.00 each.
One is of the Historic Applegate Store 1860, our Museum building, when it sat in Jacksonville at Pioneer Village.
The other is of George Mc Une standing by his Concord Stagecoach, which he built, with his 2 white mules in front of the Jacksonville Museum.
If you are interested in either one of these, stop and see Peggy at the Museum. For those of you that live out of town, let me know which one you want and how many. Place your order and send it to the PO Box. I'll send them to you in the next newsletter.

Until next time. Take care.

Barbara Niedermeyer
AVHS Sect./Tres.

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Excerpts from the memoirs of Lydia Head
Written March 1976 age 99 years

William Burton Head and I, Lydia Ann Finley, were married at my parents home on Clapboard Bar on Salmon River, California, on New Years Eve, 1896, by Justice of the Peace John Hughes. I wore a blue wool dress that my sister Hattie made. We spent the night at a cottage nearby. The next morning the groom brought up 2 saddled mules and a box of cigars, and we rode the 5 miles to where we both worked, he for the Salmon River mining company, and I teaching school, 9 children, part of which were my husband's relatives.

Mining is not a permanent occupation. Miners follow the pay streak to the end, then move on to better ground. We were discouraged when one day, through relatives, we heard of a chain of mines on Forest Creek. On a beautiful October day in 1909 we left with six children, a dog and 2 mares we drove, and each had a beautiful colt. When we finally came to Ashland, it was a relief to be over the mountains and the trees were all golden. A man came up to us and wanted to buy the colts, but Will wanted to take them to his brother in Central Point. We camped that night by Bear Creek and the whistle of passing trains kept us awake.

We went to Central Point the next morning, through the small town of Medford. There we rested one more night as the boys had walked a great deal and the dog got lame and had to ride in the wagon. I had prepared a great deal of food before we left California and we could buy fruit along the way. Now we were on the last lap of our journey going up Forest Creek. Rounding a bend in the road we see our home. The children are quickly out of the wagon and scatter like a band of quail to look the situation over. Will soon had the team unhitched and fed in the log barn across the road from the house. I went into the house with the 2 small children and found a place to lay the baby. There was a long table with a white oilcloth cover, dishes washed and put away. I built a fire in the cook stove. We had eaten so many cold lunches that a hot meal was appreciated. I found a place for all to sleep, and after a hot meal we were all ready for bed and to dream of digging gold.

It was a discouraging move. Will worked out much of the time. Jacksonville was 7 miles away, but by walking over the mountain rather than go by road, it would be 3 ½ miles so sometimes I and 1 or 2 of the children would take the small cleanup of gold dust and walk to Jacksonville for necessities, then walk home.

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We sold the mine for $100.00 and moved to a hopyard on the Applegate River where we picked hops for Bert Clute. There was not one whimper from the children though it was August and hot and dusty. Here there is a shelter, a store, bunk beds and a spring of cold water. Work started in the morning so all hands were busy. We worked very hard but enjoyed camping out and food tasted so good at the end of the day. Bert Clute was a kind employer and they had a large garden and an orchard. We earned enough for schoolbooks and clothes. My sister Hattie lived across the river from the hopyard and was married to George Foerst and they had 3 children,

The only rental available immediately was a one-room cabin. The older children – Billy, Dick, Dorothy, Bob, Blossom and Betty enrolled in school. A few miles up the river there was a mining claim owned by an old man named Charlie Fisher. He liked the boys and let them rest there and gave them fruit. He became very ill and moved to a one-room house near the store and all the neighbors helped care for him. One day he told me he was very ill and wanted the boys, Dick and Billy, to have his claim. I went with my sister to look at the place and loved it. There was a one-room house, a small storeroom, and a very neat, small, nearly new barn. There were a few fruit trees, plum, peach and apple, a small patch of alfalfa and a small garden spot. Assessment work was required to be done on a mining claim once a year and Mr. Fisher had not been able to do this. Mr. Fisher made out a quit claim deed and I paid him $17.00, all I had just then. We moved to the place with our team of horses over a very rough road over a mile from the rented cabin. Billy and Dick got lumber and laid a floor and put up a large tent. We had the Applegate River in front of us and a large ditch of water in back of us. The previous owners had used enough water from the ditch for the small alfalfa patch so we did also until we purchased land up the river and then purchased a water right to cover both places.

When Will came back from mining he did not think much of the claim as it was not enough land to make a living, but he and I homesteaded it as none of the children were old enough to take up land and we did not want to give it up as I and the children loved it so. Will went to work and added on to the house and helped clear the land. The children had a long walk to school, but helped, clear boulders, with woodcutting and other chores.

My last two children were born in Applegate, John in 1915 and Henry in 1918. Now there was a high school at Applegate. Dorothy and Blossom went on to Normal School in Ashland and got certificates to teach. Dorothy taught at the Applegate School until she married. John and Henry were school age by then so Dorothy took them to school with her when she was teaching. Wages were high in the woods so all the boys worked in the woods. In later years, Billy and Dick rented 5 acres from Mr. Grubb and raised dry beans, selling them for 6 cents a pound.

Our home on the Applegate was the best we'd ever had. The woodshed was just a few steps from the back porch. There was a roof over this area and it was a fine place to sleep in warm weather. I often slept there with the younger children. John was almost 3 years older than Henry and would go with me to milk the cows or irrigate the garden and both boys would help in every way as they got older.